to have deviations from specifications with regard to certain parameters. Depending upon the nature and extent of deviations from the specifications, State Governments who are empowered to take action under penal provisions of the ECA, 1955, took various actions like giving warning, cancellation of dealer's registration certificate, levying of penalty and launching prosecutions. During 1996-97, 220 prosecutions were launched, two convictions were secured, three cases are pending in Courts of Law and 352 cases were pending for initiating action at the end of that period.

Livestock Census in Maharashtra

3987. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether livestock census has recentrly been conducted in Maharashtra;

(b) if so, what is the present population of cattle particularly those of milching ones;

(b) what is the status of cross breed cattle in the State; and

(d) the steps being taken to improve the number and breed of livestock in the State by the Central and State Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) and (b) Livestock Census is undertaken after every five years. The work of Quinquennial Livestock Census conducted in 1997 is being processed.

(c) As per 1992 Livestock Census, the Population of miliching and crossbred cattle in Maharashtra is as below:

(Nos. in thousand)

Crossbred	Indigenous		Total
Milching cattle	826	4441	5267
Total cattel	1773	15673	17446

(d) To improve the number and breed of livestock in the State, a numbe of Central/ State Government programmes/schemes are being implemented in the state. The important schemes are as follows:—

(i) Extension of Frozen Semen Technology and Progeny Testing Programme.

(ii) National Bull Production programme.

(iii) Integrated Dairy Development Project in Non-Operation Flood, Hilly and Backward areas.

(iv) Special Livestock Breeding Programme.

Export of Agricultural Products

3988. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to boost export of certain agricultural products and farm goods;

(b) if so, the steps taken in this regard; and

(c) the targets set for export of agro-products during this year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) The policy of the government to permit exports of agricultural products and farm goods is governed principally by the concerns of India's food security, maximising farm incomes and earning foreign exchange. Review of export performance of agricultural products is an ongoing process and accordingly policy interventions are made, as and when considered necessary, with a view to making agricultural exports increasingly viable.

(b) Some of the steps taken/proposed to be taken to enhance exports of agricultural products and farm include:—

1. Providing assistance for raising small and large nurseries for production of good quality planting material, upgradation to tenchical knowhow of farmers through demonstrations, trainings and publicity, rejuvenation of old orchards, area expansion, supply of minikits for vegetables, improving productivity and training of farmers.
2. Provision of soft loans for setting up of grading/processing centres, auction platforms, ripening/curing chambers and quality testing equipment.
3. Providing financial assistance to exporters/ growers/Cooperative Societies for development of infrastructural facilities such as purchase of specialised transport units, establishment of precooling/cold storage facilities and integrated postharvest handling systems (pack houses).